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Message Text

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44
ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07 L-03
NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 OMB-01
/059 W
---------- 100324
R 111635Z DEC 76
FM AMCONSUL PONTA DELGADA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1573
INFO AMEMBASSY LISBON
AMCONSUL OPORTO
COMUSFORAZ

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PINT, PO
SUBJ: LOCAL ELECTION CAMPAIGN IN THE AZORES

1. WHAT CAMPAIGN? IN THE AZORES THE CAMPAIGN FOR THE LOCAL ELECTIONS WAS ALMOST INVISIBLE. THERE WERE ALMOST NO POSTERS AND NO WELLPUBLICIZED POLITICAL MEETINGS. THE POLITICIANS THEMSELVES DEVOTED MUCH LESS ATTENTION AND ENERGY TO THIS ELECTION THAN TO PREVIOUS. THE CDS WAS THE MOST ACTIVE IN THE MEDIA. IT HELD PRESS CONFERENCES , ISSUED COMMUNIQUES AND HELD A SERIES OF MEETING TO ENCOURAGE THE PARTY FAITHFUL. IT WAS THE ONLY PARTY TO HAVE RECEIVED A RECENT VISIT FROMA NATIONAL LEADER; BASILIA HORTA, THE CDS SECRETARY GENERAL VISITED THE AZORES JUST BEFORE THE CAMPAIGN BEGAN. HAVING RUN A POOR THIRD IN PREVIOUS ELECTIONS HERE, THE CDS MUST TRY MUCH HARDER THAN THE OTHERS. BOTH THE PSD AND THE PS LIMITED THEMSELVES TO SMALL POORLY
PUBLICIZED MEETINGS.

2. PROBABLE RESULTS: THERE SEEMS TO BE A CONSENSUS AMONG THE POLITICAL CLASS HERE ON THREE POINTS: THERE WILL BE A HIGH ABSTENTION RATE, THERE WILL BE LITTLE OR NO CHANGE IN THE RELATIVE STRENGTH OF THE PARTIES, ANDMOST WILL VOTE FOR THE CANDIDATE THEY LIKE BEST REGARDLESS OF PARTY LABEL. BOTH PSD ANDPS LEADERS HERE HAVE SAID PRIVATELY THE LOCAL ELECTION
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RESULTS SHOULD NOT BE INTERPRETED AS A REFERENDUM FOR EITHER

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THE NATIONAL OR REGIONAL GOVERNMENT. THIS DOES NOT MEAN, HOWEVER, THAT THERE WILL NOT BE THE USUSAL CRIES OF VICTORY FROM PARTYSPOKESMEN . THE DIFFICULTY IN INTERPRETING THIS ELECTION IS ILLUSTRATED BY THE STATEMENT OF ONE PSD LEADER WHO CLAIMED A NUMBER OF PSD MILITANTS WERE SEEKING ELECTION AS INDEPENDENTS ON PS OR CDS LISTS BECAUSE THE PSD LISTS WERE FULL. THE DECEMBER 12 ELECTION IN THE AZORES WILL BE AN IMPORTANT DEMOCRATIC EXERCISE GIVING THE PEOPLE A VOICE IN LOCAL ADMINISTRATION, BUT IT WILL NOT BE AN ACCURATE MEASURE OF THE POLITICAL CURRENTS.
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